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Summary of Stakeholders' submissions on Uzbekistan*

Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

I. Background

1. The present report was prepared pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 5/1 and 16/21, taking into consideration the periodicity of the universal periodic review. It is a summary of 14 stakeholders' submissions[1] to the universal periodic review, presented in a summarized manner owing to word-limit constraints.

II. Information provided by stakeholders

A. Scope of international obligations[2] and cooperation with international human rights mechanisms and bodies[3]

2. Amnesty International (AI) recommended the ratification of all outstanding human rights treaties, in particular OP-CAT and the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol.[4] It also recommended the ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and enact implementing legislation.[5]

3. AI, Joint Submission 1 (JS1), and Joint Submission 2 (JS2) recommended that Uzbekistan extend a standing invitation to the special procedures.[6]

* The present document was not edited before being sent to United Nations translation services.

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B. National human rights framework[7]

4. AI stated that Uzbekistan had supported recommendations by several States to establish a national independent mechanism to monitor all places of detention and to consider complaints. However, to date, no such national independent mechanism had been established. AI noted that Uzbekistan had also supported such recommendations during its 2008 UPR review, but without taking action on them.[8]

C. Implementation of international human rights obligations, taking into account applicable international humanitarian law

1. Cross-cutting issues

Equality and non-discrimination[9]

5. JS1 stated that there were a number of laws that clearly discriminated against women. In particular, the law allowed child marriage, as the Family Code set the marital age for girls at 17 (with the possibility to be lowered to 16 years). Not appearing in the statistics of marriages were minors who married in a religious ceremony ("Nikah"). Furthermore, family laws did not provide women with any legal rights in case of divorce. In addition, Uzbek law set an earlier retirement age for women, i.e. 55 years, while it was 60 for men, which disadvantaged women since the pension was calculated on the basis of years worked and pay earned during these years. Moreover, maternity leave did not count towards pension.[10] CAGSAN recommended that Uzbekistan equate the marriageable age for men and women to the age of adulthood (18 years).[11]

6. JS1 noted that, during the UPR in 2013, Uzbekistan had rejected recommendations on the decriminalization of consensual sex conduct between men.[12]

7. Central Asian Gender and Sexuality Advocacy Network (CAGSAN) noted that LGBT people were most often subjected to beatings; insults; discrimination in the workplace; and persecution. They faced threats, attacks, denial of available services, including denial of adequate medical care; property damage; slander; and rape attempts on the basis of their sexual orientation. According to CAGSAN, law enforcement, judicial and other authorities did not provide adequate protection to victims of violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity.[13]

8. CAGSAN recommended that Uzbekistan enact legislation on hate crimes based on sexual orientation or gender identity and thoroughly investigate and prosecute all acts of violence against vulnerable groups, including LGBTI persons; and implement awareness-raising programmes and trainings on violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity for law enforcement, judicial and other authorities.[14]

Human rights and counter-terrorism[15]

9. AI stated that the authorities had continued to secure the return – including through extradition proceedings – of numerous Uzbek citizens whom they had identified as threats to the "constitutional order" or threats to national security. Often, the Government had offered "diplomatic assurances" to sending States to secure their returns, pledging free access to detention centres for independent monitors and diplomats. In practice, however, they had not honoured these guarantees.[16]

10. According to AI, officers of the National Security Service (NSS) continued secret renditions of individuals from abroad. Many of those abducted or otherwise forcibly returned to Uzbekistan had been subjected to incommunicado detention, often in

undisclosed locations, and tortured or otherwise ill-treated to force them to confess or incriminate others.[17]

11. AI indicated that the authorities had also increased pressure on the relatives of those suspected or convicted of crimes against the State, including individuals working or seeking protection abroad. The authorities had also used the threat of bringing charges of membership of a banned Islamist group against a detained relative to prevent their families from exposing human rights violations or seeking help from human rights organizations at home or abroad.[18]

2. Civil and political rights

Right to life, liberty and security of person[19]

12. JS1 stated that the Government had not made any noticeable progress in combating torture and failed to implement recommendations received at the last UPR in 2013. Furthermore, the President's 2017-2021 Action Strategy did not address torture. Despite UPR recommendations, article 235 of the Criminal Code still did not contain all elements of the definition of torture as required by article 1 of CAT.[20] Article 235 did not cover acts by "other persons acting in an official capacity", including those acts that resulted from the investigation, consent or acquiescence of a public official.[21]

13. The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE-ODIHR) recommended extending the definition of torture to acts or omissions committed by "other persons acting in an official capacity" so that it would apply to a wide range of professionals. It also recommended explicitly including discrimination among the list of purposes for inflicting torture and excluding the application of general provisions of the Criminal Code pertaining to defences, amnesties and pardons, as well as statutes of limitations, to the criminal offense of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.[22]

14. Freedom Now (FN) recommended that Uzbekistan amend criminal legislation, including article 235 of the Criminal Code, to ensure that the definition of torture fully complies with article 7 of ICCPR, article 5 of UDHR and article 1 of CAT.[23] JS1 made a similar recommendation.[24]

15. AI stated that, despite some positive changes to national legislation, such as the October 2016 and February 2017 Presidential Decrees on legal and judicial reform and the September 2016 amendments to the Law on Internal Affairs Agencies, there were continuous reports of routine and pervasive torture and other ill-treatment of detainees and prisoners.[25]

16. AI noted that, since the last review, the authorities had continued to categorically deny reports of torture and other ill-treatment by law enforcement officials. In October 2016, the Director of the National Centre for Human Rights wrote to AI, asserting that torture allegations contained in its reports were based on fabricated evidence. However, according to AI, human rights defenders, former prisoners and relatives of prisoners continued to provide credible information that police and NSS officers routinely used torture to coerce suspects, detainees and prisoners. Individuals charged with or convicted of anti-state and terrorism-related offences were particularly vulnerable to torture both in pre-trial detention and in prison following conviction.[26]

17. FN recommended that Uzbekistan ensure that prison conditions comply with international standards, particularly with regard to access to medical care, nutritious food and clean water and comfortable temperatures; and promptly and independently investigate all abuses and deaths in custody, and hold the perpetrators accountable.[27]

18. AI noted the practice of arbitrarily extending prison terms, including for alleged minor infractions of prison rules under article 221 of the Criminal Code, which had led to many prisoners serving de facto indefinite sentences, especially those convicted of anti-State offences.[28] Human Rights Watch (HRW) stated that prison authorities had continued in 2017 to use this article to arbitrarily extend the sentences of political prisoners.[29] The Uzbek-German Forum for Human Rights (UGF) made similar observations and indicated that sentences under article 221 were disproportionate to the alleged offenses and imposed without due process.[30] FN recommended that Uzbekistan ensure that article 221 of the Criminal Code was not arbitrarily applied to extend prison sentences of or deny amnesty eligibility to prisoners.[31]

19. HRW indicated that Uzbekistan had yet to fulfill the long-standing recommendation to close Jaslyk prison and continued to house persons imprisoned on politically-motivated charges there. HRW also noted that, since 2013, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) had not carried out independent monitoring of prisons and places of detention, due to an inability to carry out visits to prison facilities and with prisoners in accordance with its modalities and free of government interference.[32] AI made similar observations.[33]

20. UGF mentioned the cases of punitive psychiatry where the Government forcibly committed human rights activists and independent journalists to psychiatric hospitals for their activities critical of the Government.[34]

Administration of justice, including impunity, and the rule of law[35]

21. JS1 stated that the judiciary was highly dependent on the executive power when it came to appointment and dismissal of judges, their assessment, and financial resources.[36] In 2017, several amendments to existing legislation were introduced in order to address the deficiencies of the judicial system. A new Supreme Judicial Council was formed for the appointment of judges, however, it was not independent. Although it was comprised of judges, members had to be presented to the Parliament and approved by the President of Uzbekistan.[37] AI expressed similar concern.[38]

22. JS1 continued that court hearings were unbalanced and privileged towards the Prosecution Office (Procuracy), as the role of defence lawyers was extremely insignificant. Procuracy, which was part of the executive branch, dominated over the judiciary system and highly affected the fairness of trials.[39]

23. Joint Submission 3 (JS3) noted that lack of transparency of the judicial system contributed to corruption and manipulation of the administration of justice. There was no publicly accessible database of court verdicts and other documents. Courts did not use stenographers or other means to record proceedings. Court clerks often did not take notes at all. There was a widespread perception among the population that courts were not independent and that many cases were decided by "telephone justice." Judges received instruction from the prosecutor or NSS on the outcome of cases for reasons related to repression and corruption.[40]

24. UGF stated that, in 2008, the Government had abolished the independent bar associations and banned the formation of any such associations. It established a single Chamber of Lawyers with mandatory membership for all licensed lawyers.[41] JS1 noted that the Chamber became part of the Ministry of Justice. A legislative change in 2009 required lawyers to undergo recertification every three years. However, such exams were misused by the Government as it disbarred many independent lawyers, who had brought before courts politically sensitive cases, including torture cases.[42] UGF indicated that some lawyers refused to take politically-sensitive cases for fear of disbarment.[43]

25. UGF reported that prisoners facing charges under article 221 (infractions of prison rules) of the Criminal Code were denied due process and did not have the opportunity to seek independent legal assistance. Relatives of prisoners were often not informed of the charges and could not hire independent lawyers or attend proceedings.[44]

26. AI stated that the authorities failed to conduct effective investigations into the allegations of torture, and impunity for the perpetrators prevailed.[45] The courts continued to rely heavily on torture-tainted "confessions" to hand down convictions.[46] JS1 stated that torture was perpetrated with almost complete impunity and remained a routine practice during investigation.[47]

27. FN reported about abuses and deaths in custody and recommended that Uzbekistan provide adequate compensation and rehabilitation to victims.

28. HRW indicated that Uzbekistan had rejected recommendations from the previous UPR cycles to allow an independent international investigation into the May 2005 Andijan massacre and its fallout. More than twelve years after the Andijan massacre of May 2005, no one had been held accountable. The Government continued to relentlessly persecute those it suspected of having ties to the protest and refused to allow an international investigation. The Government also continued to intimidate and harass the families remaining in Uzbekistan of Andijan survivors who had sought refuge abroad.[48] JS2 expressed similar concern and stated that, according to officials, 187 people had been killed in the Andijan massacre, but unofficial estimates put the number at between 500 and 1,500.[49]

29. JS1 stated that corruption remained extremely widespread and affected all levels of the Government, education, healthcare, and other public services. Citizens had to pay bribes or give presents for even the most basic public services. Anti-corruption policies and laws were weak and ineffective, as they only included corruption related to receipt of material benefits but not non-material benefits such as favours. Officials working for the Government were not required to declare their assets and earnings.[50]

30. JS3 stated that the Ministry of Finance controlled the flow of expenditures and income for cotton and cotton seed production through the *Selkhozfond*, a non-transparent, extra-budgetary fund controlled by a small circle of government elites.[51]

31. According to JS3, the system of cotton production was permeated with various corruption schemes. There existed a system of corrupt illegal relations between local authorities and farmers, between farmers and government agencies controlling them, and between farmers and providers of services and resources. People who could not or did not want to work in the cotton field must pay for a replacement worker to pick cotton in their name or make bribe payments directly to their supervisor or local official. The scale of bribes and various unrecorded payments was enormous.[52]

Fundamental freedoms and the right to participate in public and political life[53]

32. ADF International stated that government restrictions and surveillance of religious organizations and their activities violated not only article 61 of the Constitution but also article 18 of ICCPR.[54] Forum 18 noted that officials monitored and attempted to control all exercise of freedom of religion and belief. The NSS secret police carried out both covert and open surveillance of all religious communities. According to Forum 18, members of a variety of religious communities told Forum 18 about hidden microphones in places of worship, the presence of NSS agents during meetings for worship, and the recruitment of spies within communities – including among leaders.[55]

33. HRW stated that the authorities highly regulated religious worship, clothing, the sermons delivered by imams, and banned all forms of proselytism. Peaceful religious

believers were often branded as "religious extremists." The Government maintained a "black list"—made up of thousands of individuals suspected of belonging to unregistered or extremist groups—whereby those on the list were barred from various jobs and travel and must report regularly for interrogations with the police.[36]

34. HRW continued that, in August 2017, the authorities had announced a reduction of the total number of people on the "black list" from 17,582 to 1,352. President Mirziyoyev emphasized the need to rehabilitate citizens who had been "misled" by radical groups. According to HRW, however, thousands of religious believers—religious Muslims who practiced their religion outside strict state controls—remained imprisoned on vague charges of extremism.[37]

35. Forum 18 indicated that Muslims, Protestants and Jehovah's Witnesses were frequently targeted by ordinary police and "Anti-Terrorism Police" for illegal searches of homes without a search warrant. For Protestants and Jehovah's Witnesses, fines of between 50 and 350 times the monthly minimum wage, and sometimes, imprisonment of between 3 and 21 days could follow for possessing religious literature, meeting together for worship, and the study of religious texts. Muslims could also face long jail terms.[38]

36. According to Forum 18, the Government was most interested in controlling the Muslim community, and through the state-controlled Spiritual Administration of Muslims, or *Muftiate*, it also controlled what imams preached, and the number and location of mosques. The State completely controlled the selection, education and nomination of imams.[39] Ramadan each year saw strict controls on Islamic communities. In the 2016 Ramadan, the Government banned shared Muslim *iftar* (breaking of fast) meals in public in the capital Tashkent. The bans also appeared to have covered the three-day Ramazon *hayit* (*Id al-fitr*) festival. The Government also continued to ban people under 18 from attending mosques.[40]

37. Forum 18 continued that restrictions on how many pilgrims could take part in the annual haj pilgrimage to Mecca were severe. Only 7,200 out of a potential quota of about 30,000 allocated to Uzbekistan (based on the number of the Muslim population) travelled on the 2017 pilgrimage.[41] Pilgrims were officially screened by the *Mahalla* (local district) committee, NSS secret police, *Muftiate*, and the Religious Affairs Committee. The Government also used exit visas to control which of its citizens were allowed to leave the country.[42]

38. Forum 18 indicated that communities of all faiths must pass through a complex registration procedure.[43] Registration of new communities, or communities which had long existed but which the Government did not like – such as Jehovah's Witnesses – remained almost impossible. Furthermore, being granted registration did not guarantee that a community would keep registration and stay open. Some Protestant, Jehovah's Witness, Hare Krishna and Baha'i communities had been stripped of registration for an unknown reason.[44]

39. Forum 18 noted that the import and production of religious literature – including the Koran and the Bible - was strictly controlled, with compulsory prior censorship by the Religious Affairs Committee. Materials in electronic form of all faiths were also targeted.[45] Religious literature was routinely confiscated in police raids on places of worship and private homes and then destroyed.[46]

40. JS2 indicated that, during its UPR 2nd circle review, Uzbekistan had accepted 14 recommendations on the freedom of expression and access to information. Among others, Uzbekistan pledged to "Ensure media freedom, including Internet freedom, by eliminating all restrictions to the activities of independent media and human rights organizations",[47] However, according to JS2, Uzbekistan had not taken effective measures to even partially

implement the majority of those recommendations.[68] JS2 recommended that Uzbekistan bring defamation laws into line with article 19 of the ICCPR.[69]

41. JS stated that, in 2017, some steps had been taken towards increased press freedom. In April 2017, State television aired live discussions of current problems. However, the programme was taken off air after the Prime Minister was criticised.[70] Reporters without Borders International (RSF-RWB) made similar observations.[71]

42. RSF-RWB continued that cyber-censorship had also become more refined and was no longer limited to the blocking of websites. The authorities maintained a tight grip on the Internet, blocking access not only to independent news websites but also to censorship circumvention tools and many instant messaging apps. Internet service providers and mobile phone operators were instructed to monitor the activities of clients and alert the authorities when "suspect" messages were circulated. The state-owned Uztelecom company continued to control all Internet access.[72] JS2 and HRW made similar observations.[73]

43. CAGSAN stated that, in 2014, Uzbekistan issued a decree on video surveillance of the activities of Internet café visitors and the transfer of this information to employees of the internal affairs agencies and employees of NSS. In this regard, in March 2014, LGBT activists had to close their LGBT-oriented website and forum for security purposes.[74]

44. JS2 indicated that access to Uzbekistan remained restricted for individuals living abroad who had previously been blacklisted by the security services.[75] The authorities used the internet and social media to harass foreign independent journalists and human rights defenders living in exile.[76] RSF-RWB stated that at least ten journalists were still in jail and the intelligence services continued to pursue Uzbek independent journalists even after they had left the country.[77] It indicated that independent journalists were at risk of being imprisoned for covering sensitive topics such as forced labour in cotton farming, corruption or environmental issues. Trumped-up charges such as "extremism," "extortion" and "drug smuggling" were often brought against them.[78]

45. JS2 stated that Uzbekistan received nine recommendations on the freedom of association and creating an enabling environment for CSOs. It committed to ensuring "that civil society organizations and NGOs can work freely and unhindered".[79] However, JS2 indicated that Uzbekistan had failed to even partially implement the majority of them.[80]

46. JS1 stated that still no independent national or international NGO formally existed, after the Government mandated a process of re-registration for NGOs in the aftermath of the 2005 Andijan massacre.[81] HRW stated that civil society continued to operate under tight restrictions and no independent domestic human rights organization had been allowed to register. Additionally, a June 2015 law strictly regulated the activities of NGOs, requiring an onerous and burdensome process of receiving prior approval from the Ministry of Justice of at least one month before conducting virtually any activity.[82] CAGSAN raised similar concern.[83] According to JS2, registration processes were bureaucratic and costly, and applications were sometimes left unanswered.[84] An Order passed in June 2016 introduced tight controls on the foreign funding of international and domestic CSOs operating in Uzbekistan.[85]

47. AI deeply regretted Uzbekistan's rejection of UPR recommendations to release human rights defenders and those detained on politically motivated charges claiming that such information was "factually wrong".[86] JS2 also remained deeply concerned by the ongoing politically-motivated imprisonment of human rights defenders, independent journalists and critics of the authorities, and ongoing incidents of persecution, harassment and threats.[87] Such people were routinely subjected to travel restrictions, police interrogations, arbitrary arrests and, in some cases, wrongful imprisonment.[88]

48. According to JS2, since the last UPR review, journalists and human rights activists had been detained and charged with administrative violations for alleged "hooliganism" and for allegedly failing to seek state approval for their activities.[89] Journalists and human rights activists had been forced to leave Uzbekistan following threats of prosecution in retaliation for their work.[90] UGF also noted that activists who had cooperated with it in monitoring forced labour had suffered reprisals.[91]

49. HRW noted that the administration of President Mirziyoyev had slightly relaxed restrictions on the holding of modest peaceful demonstrations. But the activities of critical voices, including independent rights activists, journalists, and lawyers, were still largely suppressed.[92]

50. JS1 stated that no members of opposition parties or independent candidate had been allowed to participate in the presidential election in 4 December 2016.[93] According to OSCE-ODIHR, the presidential election of 4 December 2016 had underscored the need of comprehensive reform to address long-standing systemic shortcomings. The dominant position of state actors and limits on fundamental freedoms undermined political pluralism and led to a campaign devoid of genuine competition. OSCE-ODIHR recommended the review of limitations on fundamental rights; harmonization of various electoral laws; and the removal of restrictions on the rights of individuals to vote and run as candidates. It also recommended establishing and strictly implementing clear and open procedures for the counting of votes and amending the electoral legal framework to allow observation by non-partisan civil society organizations and filing of complaints by voters, parties, candidates and observers on any aspect of the electoral process.[94]

51. OSCE-ODIHR also stated that the December 2014 parliamentary elections lacked genuine electoral competition and debate and recommended measures to increase transparency and public confidence. It called for a concerted effort by election officials, political parties and civil society to address practices of multiple, proxy and group voting, which contravened the principles of equal suffrage and secrecy of the vote.[95]

52. JS3 stated that Uzbekistan systematically violated the right to freedom of movement through its Soviet-era *propiska* system by which citizens, residents, and visitors must register their permanent or temporary residence, and the requirement for citizens to obtain an exit visa to travel abroad.[96] Law enforcement agencies harassed and questioned people who had returned from abroad, and interrogated the relatives of people who were out of the country. Law enforcement and *Mahalla* officials conducted interviews and reported to the NSS. Police required returning travellers, especially women, to undergo interviews at the police station, explain where they travelled and justify the purpose of the trip.[97]

53. According to JS3, *propiska* in fact operated as a permit system in which the State exerted control over people's place of residence and imposed significant burdens on attempts to change residence. It also facilitated a bribery scheme because many individuals must pay bribes to officials at the Ministry of Interior to receive proper registration. It was especially difficult to obtain valid residency permits in Tashkent, the Tashkent region, as well as several other major cities, restricting people's ability to find employment in urban areas.[98]

54. JS3 noted that, in the last UPR, Uzbekistan rejected recommendation 136.53[99] to eliminate the exit visa system and explained that it was not part of its internationally recognized human rights obligations.[100]

55. JS2 indicated that those who criticised the authorities often had their freedom of movement restricted.[101] People had previously been imprisoned on politically motivated charges found it impossible to obtain permission to leave Uzbekistan after their release from prison.[102] AI was particularly concerned that former prisoners had been prevented from travelling abroad for urgent medical treatment.[103] JS1 noted that a law adopted in 2011

provided an extensive list of grounds for exit visa refusal that included possessing state secrets, criminal proceedings or nonfulfillment of a court order.[104]

56. According to JS3, on July 11, 2017, President Mirziyoev signed a decree to introduce new international passports to replace the exit visa regime. JS3 noted, however, that the Government could still use the proposed international passport system to restrict improperly the freedom of movement of citizens for political reasons and to extract bribe payment.[105] Furthermore, Uzbekistan had already introduced new, fully biometric passports in 2011 that conformed to international standards for identity documents, and therefore, JS3 stated that the Government had failed to make clear why citizens should be required to obtain a second passport for foreign travel or how the documents would differ.[106]

Prohibition of all forms of slavery[107]

57. HRW indicated that forced labor in the cotton sector during the years since the 2013 UPR had been systematic, both during the spring weeding season and the fall cotton harvest.[108] Joint Submission 4 (JS4) indicated that, since 2013, the Government continued to force citizens to harvest cotton as part of its state-controlled system of cotton production. Despite the Government's increased engagement with the International Labour Organization, the number of Uzbek adults forced to harvest cotton increased in 2015 and 2016 because of the decline in forced child labour.[109]

58. According to JS4, the State-run mobilization campaign largely targeted public sector employees, people receiving welfare and child benefits, and students who were forced into the fields under the threat of losing jobs, social benefits, or university placements.[110] HRW made similar observations.[111] JS4 noted that, in 2017, many citizens reported being forced by their supervisors or local officials to sign declarations that they agreed to pick cotton "voluntarily" and agreed to dismissal or expulsion if they failed to participate in the harvest or meet their picking quota.[112]

59. According to HRW, in August 2017, the Government issued a public decree banning the mobilization of public sector workers, including teachers and medical personnel, to pick cotton. In September 2017, there were reports that the Government had taken steps to curtail the mobilization of college students, teachers, and medical personnel, but HRW stated that it was unclear to what extent these efforts were consistent across the regions of Uzbekistan. Reports had also been received that, in some regions, if teachers or medical personnel did not want to work in the fields, they had to make a financial contribution to hire a worker to replace them.[113] JS3 and JS4 made similar observations.[114]

60. JS4 noted that the Government had not yet taken steps to dismantle the production quota system of centralized control, which created pressure on local officials to resort to forced labour to meet otherwise hard-to-reach objectives.[115] JS4 urged Uzbekistan to bring an end to the cotton quotas that forced farmers to produce cotton and the labour quotas that forced local administrators to coercively mobilize Uzbek citizens into cotton fields.[116]

3. Economic, social and cultural rights

Right to health[117]

61. CAGSAN stated that HIV-related services were under the close scrutiny of the State, and as a result, some MSM (Men who have sex with men) did not receive medical services and information on the prevention and treatment of HIV and STIs (sexually transmitted infections). It expressed concern about the lack of compulsory sex education in schools, which was considered to be contrary to "national values".[118]

4. Rights of specific persons or groups

Women[119]

62. JS1 stated that the role of women was primarily as a mother and caregiver, rather than an active member of society.[120] JS1 furthermore noted that, in 2016, in order to respond to the dramatic rise of divorces in Tashkent, the mayor of Tashkent had introduced reconciliation committees run by *Mahallas*. It was a quasi-judicial body comprised of members of *Mahalla* with the purpose of preserving family and preventing divorces. Since 2016, no court in Tashkent accepted writs for divorce without a conclusion of a reconciliation committee. In the vast majority of cases, couples had to refer to the *Mahallas* in the neighbourhood of the husband's family. Meetings of the reconciliation committee were typically of accusatory character and blamed the woman for attempting to destroy her family and violating patriarchal norms of the Uzbek society.[121]

63. JS1 stated that domestic violence was still not properly addressed in legislation and that Uzbekistan lacked a comprehensive system responding to domestic violence cases. There was no legal definition of domestic violence or violence against women, and officials used the term "family conflict."[122] CAGSAN noted that the Criminal Code did not consider domestic violence a crime and did not prohibit it.[123]

64. CAGSAN indicated that LGBT people were often subjected to domestic violence and that LGBT women were more vulnerable. Some of them were beaten by their relatives after voluntary coming-out or forced outing. Others were thrown out of the homes or put under house arrest. The abuse by relatives had led to suicide attempts in some cases. There were reported cases of corrective rape of lesbians by brothers.[124]

65. Forum 18 stated that women exercising their freedom of religion and belief were particularly vulnerable to targeting by male officials in the highly patriarchal society, and there were strong social pressures against women speaking out about such human rights violations.[125] Forum 18 indicated that assaults, including the use of sexual violence by male officials, appeared to be common and were known to have been experienced by Muslim, Protestant and Jehovah's Witness women. Men exercising their freedom of religion and belief had also been threatened by police with being forced to witness their wives being raped.[126]

66. JS3 stated that girls and women under age 35 attempting to receive exit visas are required to undergo an interview and receive "permission" from their parents or, if they were married, from their husbands or parents-in-law before receiving an exit visa. Parents, husbands, or in-laws must guarantee that their daughter or wife would not enter into prostitution.[127] JS1 made similar observations.[128]

67. CAGSAN noted cases of women who had been subjected to forced sterilization in the Tashkent region and recommended Uzbekistan take all necessary measures, including the adoption of legislation, to prohibit forced sterilization of women.[129]

Children[130]

68. Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children (GIEACPC) noted that, since 2013, Uzbekistan had repeatedly declared that corporal punishment was prohibited in all settings, in particular referring to the 2014 Guardianship and Custody Act. However, according to GIEACPC, this Act did not explicitly prohibit corporal punishment.[131] It was unlawful in schools, penal institutions and as a sentence for a crime, while it was still lawful in the home and in alternative care and day care settings. GIEACPC indicated that the Domestic Violence Bill and the potential amendments to the Family Code would provide opportunities for enacting an explicit prohibition of corporal punishment of children in all settings.[132]

Notes

[1] The stakeholders listed below have contributed information for this summary; the full texts of all original submissions are available at: www.ohchr.org.

Civil society

Individual submissions:

ADF International	ADF International, Geneva (Switzerland);
AI	Amnesty International, London (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);
CAGSAN	Central Asian Gender and Sexuality Advocacy Network, Tashkent (Uzbekistan);
FN	Freedom Now, Washington DC (United States of America);
Forum 18	Forum 18, Oslo (Norway);
GIEACPC	Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, London (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);
HRW	Human Rights Watch, Geneva (Switzerland);
RSF-RWB	Reporters Without Borders International, Paris (France);
UGF	Uzbek-German Forum for Human Rights, Berlin (Germany).

Joint submissions:

JS1	**Joint submission 1 submitted by**: World Organization against Torture (OMCT) and Uzbek League for Human Rights (ULHR);
JS2	**Joint submission 2 submitted by**: CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation, International Partnership for Human Rights (IPHR) and Association for Human Rights in Central Asia (AHRCA);
JS3	**Joint submission 3 submitted by:** Uzbek-German Forum for Human Rights (UFG), Stated Crime Initiative (SCI), and Centre for Civil and Political Rights (CCPR-Centre);
JS4	**Joint submission 4 submitted by**: Anti-Slavery, Cotton Campaign, International Labor Rights Forum, Responsible Sourcing Network, and Uzbek-German Forum for Human Rights.

Regional intergovernmental organization(s):

OSCE-ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights/Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (Warsaw) Poland.

[2] The following abbreviations are used in UPR documents:

UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
ICCPR-OP 2	Second Optional Protocol to ICCPR, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty;
CAT	Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;
OP-CAT	Optional Protocol to CAT.

[3] For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/24/7, paras. 133.6-7, 133.21-25, 134.4-8, 135.1-4, 136.1-35, 136.38, and 136.40-41.

[4] AI, p. 7. See also Freedom Now (FN), para. 31.i).

[5] AI, p. 7.

[6] AI, p. 7. / JS1, p. 11. / JS2, para. 6.5.

[7] For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/24/7, paras. 133.2, 133.4-5, 133.9-15, 133.20, 133.28, 133.98, 134.1-3.

[8] AI, p. 2.

[9] For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/24/7, paras. 133.29 and 136.49-52.

[10] JS1, p. 7.

[11] CASGAN, para. 16, and recommendation g).

[12] JS1, p.9.

[13] CASGAN, para. 12.

[14] CASGAN, p. 5, recommendations c) and d).
[15] For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/24/7, paras. 133.97.
[16] AI, p. 5.
[17] AI, p. 5.
[18] AI, p. 5.
[19] For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/24/7, paras. 133.1-7, 133.30-31, 133.33-36, 136.44-46, 134.9-12, 135.8, 136.39, 136.42, and 136.56.
[20] JS1, p. 5.
[21] JS1, p. 5.
[22] OSCE-ODHIR, p. 4.
[23] Freedom Now, para. 31 i).
[24] JS1, p. 12.
[25] HRW, p. 1.
[26] HRW, pp. 4-5.
[27] Freedom Now, para. 31 j).
[28] AI, p. 5.
[29] HRW, p. 2.
[30] UGF, para. 13.
[31] Freedom Now, para.31 e).
[32] HRW, p. 2.
[33] AI, p. 6.
[34] UGF, paras. 19-22.
[35] For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/24/7, paras. 133.1-7, 133.55-57, 134.16, and 136.48.
[36] JS1, p. 4.
[37] JS1, p. 5.
[38] AI, pp. 3-4.
[39] JS1, p. 5.
[40] JS3, p. 4.
[41] UGF, para. 9.
[42] JS1, p. 5.
[43] UGF, para. 11.
[44] UGF, para. 14.
[45] AI, p. 1.
[46] AI, pp. 4-5.
[47] JS1, p. 6.
[48] HRW, p. 6.
[49] JS2, para. 5.3.
[50] JS1, p. 4.
[51] JS3, paras. 10 and 12.
[52] JS3, paras. 15-16.
[53] For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/24/7, paras. 133.1-7, 133.60-71, 134.17-29, 134.57-58, 134.64, 135.14, 136.37, 136.43, and 136.53-55.
[54] ADF International, para. 7.
[55] Forum 18, para. 6.
[56] HRW, p. 4.
[57] HRW, p. 4. See also JS2, para. 3.11.
[58] Forum 18, para. 12.
[59] Forum 18, para. 14.
[60] Forum 18, para. 15.
[61] Forum 18, para. 16.
[62] Forum 18, para. 17.
[63] Forum 18, para. 18.
[64] Forum 18, para. 20.
[65] Forum 18, para. 22.
[66] Forum 18, para. 23.
[67] See A/HRC/24/7, para.134.27 (Estonia).

[68] JS2, para. 4.1.
[69] JS2, para. 6.3.
[70] JS2, para. 4.3.
[71] RSF-RWB, p. 3.
[72] RSF-RWB, p. 3.
[73] HRW, p. 3. / JS2, para. 4.5.
[74] CASGAN, para. 11.
[75] JS2, para. 4.6.
[76] JS2, para. 4.7.
[77] RSF-RWB, p. 1.
[78] RSF-RWB, p. 1.
[79] See A/HRC/24/7, para. 134.25 (Germany).
[80] JS2, para. 2.1.
[81] JS1, p. 2.
[82] HRW, p. 3. See also JS2, para. 2.4.
[83] CASGAN, para. 9.
[84] JS2, para. 2.4.
[85] JS2, para. 2.5.
[86] AI, p. 1.
[87] JS2, para. 1.6.
[88] JS2, para. 3.2.
[89] JS2, para. 3.8.
[90] JS2, para. 3.9.
[91] UGF, para. 8.
[92] HRW, p. 3.
[93] JS1, p. 1.
[94] OSCE-ODHIR, p. 2.
[95] OSCE-ODHIR, p. 3.
[96] JS3, para. 19.
[97] JS3, para. 20.
[98] JS3, para. 21.
[99] Eliminate the system of exit visas for those wishing to travel abroad (Chile), para. 136.53, A/HRC/24/7.
[100] JS3, para. 24.
[101] JS2, para. 3.13.
[102] JS2, para. 3.15.
[103] AI, p. 6.
[104] JS1, p. 10.
[105] JS3, para. 25.
[106] JS3, para. 26.
[107] For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/24/7, paras. 133.1-7, 133.39-54 and 135.10-13.
[108] HRW, p. 5. See also JS4, para. 5. / JS3, para. 10.
[109] JS4, para. 4.
[110] JS4, para. 6.
[111] HRW, p. 5.
[112] JS4, para. 7.
[113] HRW, p. 5.
[114] JS3, para. 15. / JS4, para. 9. See also JS4, para. 11.
[115] JS4, para. 10.
[116] JS4, para. 15.
[117] For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/24/7, paras. 133.1-7, 133.81-83, 133.85-86, and 133.91.
[118] CASGAN, paras. 19-20.
[119] For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/24/7, paras. 133.1-7, 133.26-27, 133.37, 133.59, 133.72-73, 134.13-14, 134.30, 135.5-7, 135.9, and 136.36.
[120] JS1, p. 7.
[121] JS1, p. 8.

[122] JS1, p. 8.
[123] CASGAN, para. 17 and recommendation h).
[124] CASGAN, para. 17 and recommendation h).
[125] Forum 18, para. 4.
[126] Forum 18, para. 4.
[127] JS3, para.
[128] JS1, p. 10.
[129] CASGAN, para. 14.
[130] For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/24/7, paras. 133.1-7 and 133.38.
[131] GIEACPC, p. 1.
[132] GIEACPC, p. 2.